

# Some interesting films on US television, June 13-19

## 12 June 1998

Asterisk indicates a film of exceptional interest

### Saturday, June 13

12:30 pm (TCM) – *A Tale of Two Cities* (1935) – Ronald Colman provides some outstanding moments in this film version of Charles Dickens' novel about the French Reign of Terror. An extravagant MGM production, directed by Jack Conway. With Edna May Oliver, Basil Rathbone and Reginald Owen.

\*12:45 pm (Bravo) – *Ju Dou* (1990) – Young peasant woman (Gong Li) is forced to marry an elderly factory owner and commences an affair with his nephew, in this story about China in the 1920s. Directed by Zhang Yimou, the film was banned in China.

3:00 pm (AMC) – *An Affair to Remember* (1957) – Leo McCarey directed this remake of his own 1939 *Love Affair* (Irene Dunne and Charles Boyer), this time with Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr. A shipboard romance has unexpected complications on land. Sentimental, but it has something.

5:45 pm (TCM) – *The Red Badge of Courage* (1951) – John Huston's intelligent adaptation of Stephen Crane's Civil War novel, about a young soldier in the Union army who runs from his first encounter with the enemy, but comes to terms with his fear.

8:30 pm (TCM) – *Dial M for Murder* (1954) – A lesser film by Alfred Hitchcock, with Ray Milland as a husband who plots his wife's death. Grace Kelly is the wife who, when the plot fails, falls under suspicion of murder. With Bob Cummings.

9:00 pm (Bravo) – *Julia* (1977) – Vanessa Redgrave won an Oscar for her performance as the anti-fascist Julia based on Lillian Hellman's autobiographical work, *Pentimento*. With Jane Fonda, Jason Robards; directed by Fred Zinnemann. (Also, Sunday at 1:00 am and 5:00 pm; Tuesday at 8:00 pm; Wednesday at 12:00 am and 3:00 pm.)

10:00 pm (A&E) – *The Drowning Pool* (1975) – Paul Newman, as private detective Harper, becomes entangled in a murder case. Joanne Woodward is his ex-wife. Based on the Ross McDonald novels. Directed by Stuart Rosenberg. (Also, Sunday at 2:00 am.)

10:30 pm (TCM) – *Sorry, Wrong Number* (1948) – Barbara Stanwyck is an invalid who overhears a conversation on the phone about a murder plot and discovers she is the intended victim. With Burt Lancaster and Wendell Corey; directed by Anatole Litvak.

### Sunday, June 14

1:15 am (AMC) – *Hollywood or Bust* (1956) – The last pairing of Dean

Martin and Jerry Lewis, in one of Frank Tashlin's garish works. Lewis is a movie fan and Martin a gambler, on their way to Hollywood. With Anita Ekberg.

2:50 am (AMC) – *Kiss of Death* (1947) – Perhaps best known for Richard Widmark's turn as a giggling, psychopathic killer. Victor Mature is a criminal who goes to work for the authorities. Directed by Henry Hathaway.

7:15 am (AMC) – *You Can't Take It With You* (1938) – Frank Capra's version of the George S. Kaufman-Moss Hart comedy about an eccentric family trying to survive the Depression. Starring James Stewart and Jean Arthur.

10:00 am (TCM) – *The Mask of Dimitrios* (1944) – Not as good as the wonderful political drama/suspense novel by Eric Ambler, about inter-war intrigue in the Balkans (eerily echoed in today's headlines), but a solid film in its own right. With Zachary Scott, Peter Lorre and Sidney Greenstreet; directed by Jean Negulesco.

11:00 am (AMC) – *Monkey Business* (1952) – Cary Grant and Ginger Rogers in Howard Hawks' comedy about a chemistry professor who comes up with youth serum. Marilyn Monroe and Charles Coburn co-star.

4:15 pm (TBS) – *Coal Miner's Daughter* (1980) – Sissy Spacek, who did her own singing, is excellent in this slightly sanitized biography of country singer Loretta Lynn, born in poverty in Kentucky. Tommy Lee Jones as her husband, Beverly D'Angelo as Patsy Cline and Levon Helm as her coal-miner father also stand out. Directed by Michael Apted. (Also, Monday at 1:00 am.)

5:00 pm (USA) – *The Remains of the Day* (1993) — James Ivory directed this story of 1930s England, with Emma Thompson as a housekeeper and Anthony Hopkins as the repressed, self-abnegating butler in the service of a pro-fascist aristocrat (James Fox).

\*6:00 pm (AMC) – *Bend of the River* (1952) – Excellent Anthony Mann-James Stewart collaboration. Stewart is former outlaw guiding wagon trains west; Arthur Kennedy is his ex-partner in crime who now steals settlers' supplies. Remarkable moral drama about what violent events do to people and the choices they have.

6:00 pm (TCM) – *Battleground* (1949) – William Wellman directed this dramatic reenactment of World War Two's Battle of the Bulge. The large cast includes Van Johnson, John Hodiak, Ricardo Montalban and George Murphy.

8:00 pm (TNT) – *Rain Man* (1988) – Barry Levinson's anti-Reaganite work, with Dustin Hoffman as an autistic man and Tom Cruise, a 1980s Babbitt, as his yuppie hustler brother.

9:30 pm (TCM) – *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) – John Cassavetes is excellent as ambitious actor who involves himself in diabolical activities to advance his career. Mia Farrow is his unsuspecting wife. Roman Polanski wrote the screenplay, based on the Ira Levin potboiler, and directed.

## Monday, June 15

\*12:00 am (TCM) – *The Merry Widow* (1925) – Erich von Stroheim’s cynical silent version of the Franz Lehar operetta about a prince (John Gilbert) forced to woo a rich American widow (Mae Murray).

\*2:00 am (TCM) – *The Merry Widow* (1934) – Ernst Lubitsch directed this version of the Franz Lehar operetta. Described by one critic as “the last musical of a certain spirit and style to be made on this planet.” (Also, Thursday at 6:00 am.)

6:00 am (AMC) – *Unfinished Business* (1941) – A remarkable film in many ways, despite its conventional story. Irene Dunne is an aspiring singer from a small town who goes to the big city. Rejected by one brother (Preston Foster), she marries the other (Robert Montgomery) on the rebound. Early scene on the train between Dunne and Foster is remarkable for its sexual frankness. Gregory La Cava directed.

7:45 am (AMC) – *Champion* (1949) – Effective boxing drama, with Kirk Douglas as selfish, ambitious fighter determined to get to the top and stay there. Paul Stewart is his friend whom he betrays. Directed by Mark Robson.

9:00 am (TCM) – *Side Street* (1949) – Anthony Mann directed this story about a young man driven to theft, whose troubles multiply. The same stars as Nicholas Ray’s *They Live By Night* (1949): Farley Granger and Cathy O’Donnell. (Also, Thursday at 12:00 am.)

10:00 am (History) – *Merrill’s Marauders* (1962) – It’s questionable how much this has to do with real history, but engrossing war film directed by Samuel Fuller; Jeff Chandler as commander of US soldiers fighting Japanese in Burmese jungle. (Also, Monday at 3:00 pm.)

\*11:00 am (Bravo) – *Amarcord* (1974) – Italian director Federico Fellini’s semi-autobiographical work about a small town in Italy under Mussolini. An extraordinary film. (Also, Monday at 10:00 pm; Tuesday at 3:45 am.)

\*1:15 pm (Bravo) – *Children of Paradise* (1945) – Famous film begun during the Nazi occupation of France; director Marcel Carné and screen writer Jacques Prévert tell story of 19th century French acting troupe and its star (Arletty), loved by three men. Legendary Jean-Louis Barrault plays the mime who achieves great fame.

\*6:00 pm (TCM) – *The 400 Blows* (1959) – François Truffaut’s semi-autobiographical film about a young boy in Paris suffering the slings and arrows of everyday, lower middle-class life. With Jean-Pierre L aud.

8:00 pm (TCM) – *King Kong* (1933) – Beauty and the Beast story, with Fay Wray as the former and an animated ape as the latter. Last ten minutes are worth waiting for. Directed by Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack.

\*10:00 pm (TCM) – *A Night at the Opera* (1935) – Along with *Duck Soup*, one of the Marx Brothers’ best efforts. Unfortunately, a silly, uninteresting love story occasionally gets in the way. Directed by Sam Wood; with the inimitable Margaret Dumont, also Kitty Carlisle and Alan Jones.

## Tuesday, June 16

\*1:15 am (AMC) – *I Walk Alone* (1948) – Interesting *film noir*, with Burt Lancaster as a man out of prison after 14 years, looking to settle some scores or at least make sense of things. With Lizabeth Scott, Kirk Douglas, Marc Lawrence and Wendell Corey. Byron Haskin directed.

2:00 am (TCM) – *Lady for a Day* (1933) – Frank Capra directed this story about an apple vendor transformed into a society lady by a kindhearted hoodlum. With May Robson and Warren Williams.

*Broadway Melody of 1936* (TCM) – –Eleanor

astonishing and slightly intimidating tap-dancing highlights this revue. Insofar as there is a story, it concerns gossip columnist Jack Benny’s efforts to frame producer Robert Taylor. Directed by Roy Del Ruth.

6:00 am (AMC) – *Fifth Avenue Girl* (1939) – Ginger Rogers is an unemployed girl who is hired by a millionaire (Walter Connolly) to teach his family a lesson. Directed by Gregory La Cava.

7:30 am (AMC) – *To Each His Own* (1946) – Wartime drama, with Olivia de Havilland as an unwed mother giving up her child and pretending to be his aunt. John Lund plays both her lover and her son. Directed by Mitchell Leisen with some finesse.

\*1:00 pm (AMC) – *Heaven Can Wait* (1943) – Don Ameche stars as a dead man seeking entry to hell, who recounts in flash back what he thinks has been a life full of sin. With Gene Tierney and Charles Coburn. Directed by Ernst Lubitsch.

6:00 pm (Bravo) – *Under the Volcano* (1984) – John Huston’s adaptation of Malcolm Lowry’s novel: the last few days in the life of an alcoholic British diplomat in Mexico in late 1930s, with Albert Finney. (Also, Wednesday at 4:00 am and 1:00 pm.)

\*6:00 pm (TCM) – *Jules and Jim* (1962) – One of the films that made a name for the French New Wave. Jeanne Moreau, Oskar Werner and Henri Serre as an unusual love triangle, whose relations change over the years. Directed by Fran ois Truffaut, from the novel by Henri-Pierre Roch e.

6:30 pm (AMC) – *Man from the Alamo* (1953) – Not a great film, but an interesting study of a man (Glenn Ford) branded, by mistake, as a deserter. Directed with energy by the talented Budd Boetticher. Perhaps a comment on the McCarthy witch-hunts?

8:00 pm (TCM) – *On the Town* (1949) – Memorable MGM musical—three sailors with 24 hours’ leave in New York City. Based on the show by Betty Comden-Adolph Green-Leonard Bernstein, with Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra, Vera-Ellen and Betty Garrett. Directed by Stanley Donen and Kelly.

12:45 am (AMC) - *Man Without a Star* (1955) - A tense King Vidor-directed western, with Kirk Douglas as a drifter, Jeanne Crain as a manipulative rancher.

2:00 am (TCM) - *Woman of the Year* (1942) - Katharine Hepburn as a globe-trotting political commentator and Spencer Tracy as a sports reporter, in their first film together. Entertaining film, directed by George Stevens, marred by a conformist ending.

\*8:00 am (TCM) - *Some Came Running* (1958) - Remarkable melodrama, directed by Vincente Minnelli, about disillusionment in a small town after World War II; more generally, this is an extraordinary film about disillusionment with postwar America. With Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Shirley MacLaine, Martha Hyer.

11:00 am (AMC) - *Daisy Kenyon* (1947)—One of Otto Preminger interesting postwar melodramas. Joan Crawford, Dana Andrews and Henry Fonda form a love triangle.

\*12:45 pm (AMC) - *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939) - John Ford’s account of Abraham Lincoln’s early years as a frontier lawyer, starring Henry Fonda.

4:00 pm (AMC) - *Dark City* (1950) - Charlton Heston in his film debut, as a cynical lowlife who, along with a few accomplices, takes Don DeFore in a card game, with unforeseen consequences. Future *Dragnet* co-stars, Jack Webb and Harry Morgan, are two of Heston’s pals. With Lizabeth Scott and Viveca Lindfors. Directed by William Dieterle.

6:00 pm (TCM) - *The Trial* (1962) - Orson Welles’ delirious, over-the-top version of the Franz Kafka novel, much of it shot in an abandoned railroad station. Hard to take at times, but its Expressionist paranoia and terror are fascinating.

\*8:00 pm (Bravo) - *Life is Sweet* (1990) - Allison Steadman and Jim Broadbent are a British suburban, working class couple in Mike Leigh’s moving, occasionally irritating film. Jane Horrocks is remarkable as their

self-loathing daughter; Claire Skinner is her plumber sister. (Also, Thursday at 2:00 am and 3:00 pm.)

\*8:00 pm (TCM) - *On the Waterfront* (1954) - Elia Kazan's famed film, with Marlon Brando as an ex-boxer working on the docks, Rod Steiger as his crooked brother, Lee J. Cobb as a corrupt union boss, Karl Malden as a crusading priest, Eva Marie Saint as Brando's girl-friend. Kazan was seeking to justify his role as an informant to HUAC; a good movie made for the wrong reasons.

\*10:00 pm (TCM) - *Sweet Smell of Success* (1957) - A remarkably frank look at the public relations and gossip column rackets, with Tony Curtis as a press agent who makes a deal with an egomaniacal columnist (Burt Lancaster) to break up the romance of the latter's sister. Directed by the talented Alexander Mackendrick

1:30 am (TCM) - *Cry Terror!* (1958) - Andrew L. Stone and his helpful wife-editor made this little suspense drama about psychopath Rod Steiger who kidnaps and bombs to blackmail an airline. With James Mason, Inger Stevens, Angie Dickinson and Neville Brand.

2:00 am (AMC) - *The Razor's Edge* (1946) - An overlong film, with some embarrassingly silly moments, but also some extraordinarily believable ones. With Tyrone Power, looking for the meaning of life, Gene Tierney, Anne Baxter. Directed by Edmund Goulding, from the novel by Somerset Maugham.

11:00 am (Bravo) - *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (1941) - Longwinded, but interesting version of Stephen Vincent Benet's story about a New England Faust defended against the devil's claims by Daniel Webster. Edward Arnold is Webster and Walter Huston a marvelous Mr. Scratch (the devil). Directed by the German émigré William Dieterle. (Also, Thursday at 5:00 pm.)

1:00 pm (AMC) - *Back Street* (1941) - One of the great tear-jerkers of all time in its second and lesser version, directed by Robert Stevenson. Margaret Sullavan is the "back street" woman having an affair with married Charles Boyer.

4:00 pm (AMC) - *The Big Trail* (1930) - An early sound picture, with John Wayne, in his first starring role, shepherding a flock of pioneers westward. Somewhat stiff and awkward, but with very nice touches. Directed with his customary vigor by Raoul Walsh.

10:00 pm (TCM) - *West Side Story* (1961) - Robert Wise's somewhat dull and muted version of the classic Leonard Bernstein-Stephen Sondheim-Jerome Robbins musical, a modern version of the Romeo and Juliet story. Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer entirely lacked electricity; but George Chakiris, Rita Moreno and Russ Tamblyn perform well.

10:15 pm (AMC) - *Breaking Away* (1979) - Intelligent story of group of "townies" in Bloomington, Indiana, home of Indiana University. Directed by Peter Yates.

3:00 am (AMC) - *Morning Glory* (1935) - Katharine Hepburn is a small-town girl who tries to make it as an actress in New York City. Hepburn, according to one critic, displays "a self-mocking irony and delirious rapture that few actresses have ever attempted, much less achieved." Directed by Lowell Sherman.

4:00 am (A&E) - *Lilith* (1964) - Warren Beatty and Jean Seberg starred in this work about a therapist who falls for a troubled patient. One critic called it director Robert Rossen's "noblest and most lyrical failure."

2:30 pm (AMC) - *People Will Talk* (1951) - Odd film, directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, with Cary Grant as a philosophizing doctor, married to Jeanne Crain. He is accused of malpractice and has to defend himself.

\*6:30 pm (AMC) - *Strangers on a Train* (1951) - Hitchcock classic, with Farley Granger as a callow tennis player and Robert Walker as a psychopath, based on the Patricia Highsmith novel, co-scripted by Raymond Chandler.

8:15 pm (AMC) - *The Far Country* (1955) - James Stewart, Ruth Roman, Walter Brennan and John McIntire co-star in this Anthony Mann

western about a cattleman who brings his herd to Alaska and encounters many difficulties. As always with Mann, the Albert Bierstadt of movie directors, the exteriors are magnificent.

9:00 pm (VH1) - *The Last Waltz* (1978) - Martin Scorsese directed the filming of the last concert performance by The Band, with friends and colleagues Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Bob Dylan, Van Morrison, Emmylou Harris, Ronnie Hawkins et al.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**